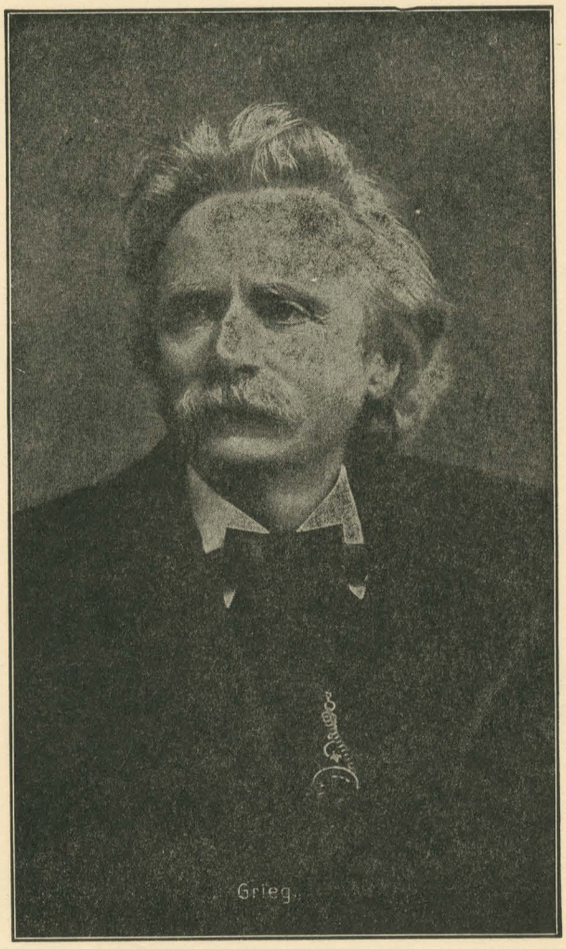
ALBUM-LEAF

Op. 12, No. 7

By

EDVARD GRIEG



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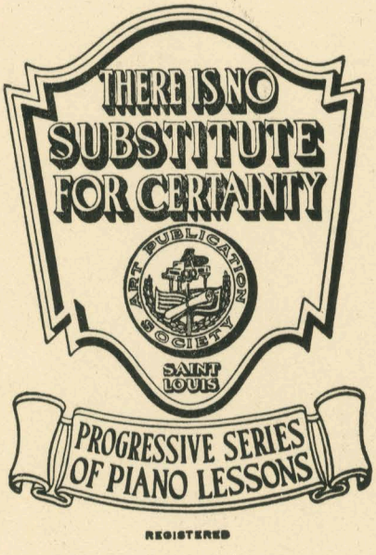
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ALBUM LEAF

Biographical Sketch—Edvard Hagerup Grieg

Edvard Grieg was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1843, and died (also in Bergen) in 1907. He received his first piano lessons from his mother, who was a talented amateur. He began composing before his tenth year, and so unmistakable was his talent that, on the recommendation of the eminent violinist, Ole Bull, he was sent to Leipzig, where he studied theory and composition with such masters as Hauptmann, Richter, and Reinecke, and the piano with Wenzel and Moscheles. After four years at Leipzig, young Grieg went to Copenhagen, where he received instruction from Niels W. Gade.

In 1867 he founded and conducted the Musical Union in Christiana, Norway. At about that time he began his crusade for "Nationalism" in music—a movement started by his talented friend Rikard Nordraak. It has been said that but for the untimely death of Nordraak (in his twenty-sixth year), leaving Grieg without his invaluable support, these two men might have instigated such progress in Scandinavia in the cause of musical nationalism as was made in Russia by Balakirev, Borodin, Moussorgsky, and their colleagues. Even so, Grieg's compositions are noticeably based on the folk songs of his native land in character if not literally in fact.

There is no doubt that Grieg was most successful in compositions in the smaller forms, such as his lyric piano pieces, and his many lovely songs. That he could, however, compose works on a larger scale is amply evidenced by the three violin sonatas, the cello sonata, and a charming piano sonata, not to mention orchestral suites, including the universally popular Peer Gynt Suite, and the beautiful A minor Piano Concerto.

Everything that Grieg wrote displays the most meticulous care regarding perfection of detail. His innate musical refinement extends even to those piano pieces which reflect the rugged spirit of Norwegian folk music. Grieg has sometimes been called the "Chopin of the North."

Form and Structure: This little piece consists of seven periods of eight measures each—56 measures in all. There are two themes, the first of which appears in the first period (meas. 1-8). This theme (in E minor) reappears in the fourth period (meas. 25-32) and again in the seventh period (meas. 49-56). The other theme (in G major) is first heard in the second period (meas. 9-16), and is immediately repeated in the third period (meas. 17-24), but with the harmony modified so as to lead back to the first theme at meas. 25. The G major theme is heard twice more (the fifth and sixth periods), these two periods being identical with the second and third periods. So we hear the original E minor theme three times, and the second (the G major) theme four times in all.

Method of Study: The first page of this composition covers all the musical material, so when this page is mastered, the piece is learned. Moreover, even in this page there is much repetition, which the student will discover at once for himself.

It is recommended to practice four measures at a time, memorizing them also before proceeding to the following four measures. The melody, sometimes in the R. H. and sometimes in the L. H., should always be played slightly more loudly than the accompaniment; or perhaps it would be better to say that the accompaniment should be so subdued that the melody, expressively but *simply* played, will stand in relief. A careful observance of the phrasing, pedaling, and dynamics is necessary for an effective performance of this delightful little melody.

Glossary

allegretto	pronounced	äl-lā-grĕt′-tō	(at a moderate pace)
e	"	ā	(and)
dolce	"	dōl′-tshā	(sweet)
forzando (fz.)	"	fôr-tsän′-dō	(strongly accented)
simile	"	sē′-mē̆-lā	(in a similar manner)

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Album-leaf

Allegretto e dolce ♩=72

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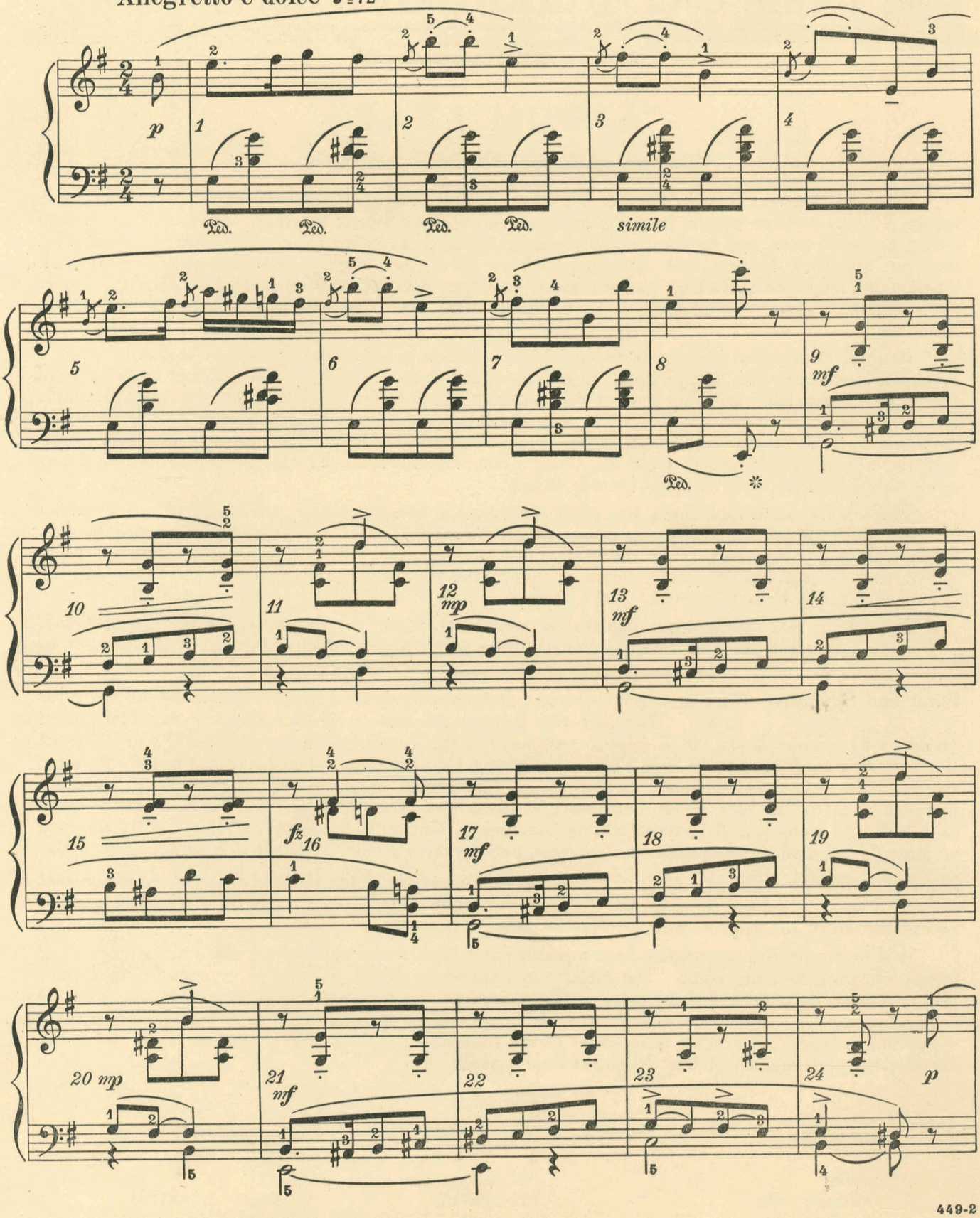

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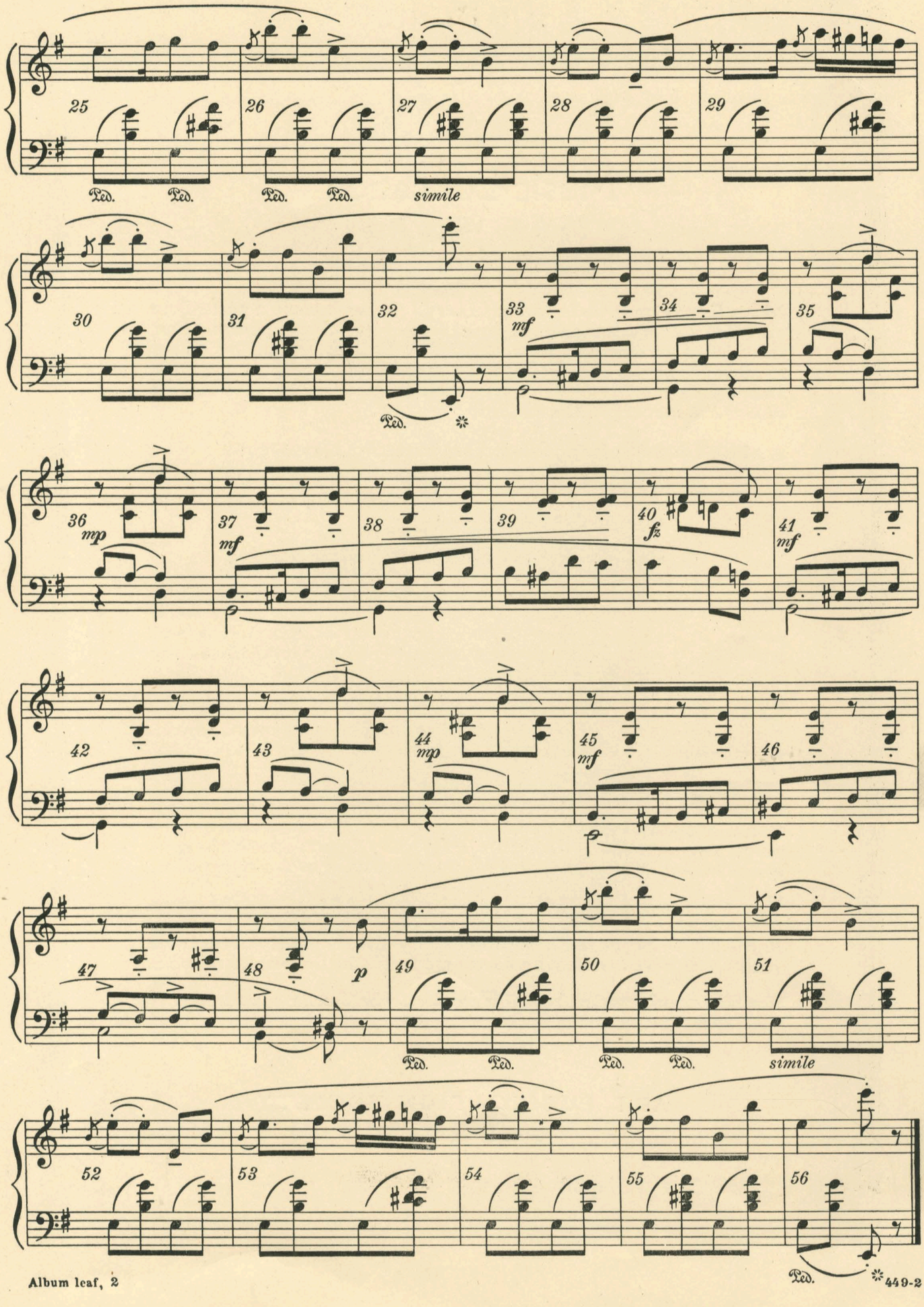
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